

Message Text

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EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, KS, US
SUBJECT: ALLEGED BUGGING OF BLUE HOUSE
SUMMARY. IN RESPONSE FORNMIN PAK'S REQUEST FOR PUBLIC AS
WELL AS PRIVATE DENIAL LATEST NYT BLUE HOUSE BUGGING ALLEG-
TION, AMBASSADOR TOOK SAME APPROACH AS LAST YEAR WHEN BUGGING
STORY FIRST SURFACED. PAK WENT ON TO EXPRESS CONSIDERABLE
CONCERN ABOUT U.S./ROK RELATIONS, TROOP WITHDRAWAL, ETC.
AMBASSADOR URGED POSITIVE APPROACH ON THESE ISSUES.

END SUMMARY

1. TEH FOREIGN MINISTER WAS IN A GLOOMY MOOD WHEN HE CALLED
IN AMBASSADOR JUNE 21 TO REGISTER CONCERN OVER NEW YORK
TIMES' LATEST ALLEGATION OF BLUE HOUSE BUGGING AND TO ASK
THAT WE DENY STORY BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY. AMBASSADOR
TOLD FOREIGN MINISTER THAT WE WOULD TAKE SAME APPROACH WE
HAD LAST YEAR WHEN STORY FIRST SURFACED: PUBLICLY WE WOULD
STATE WE DO NOT COMMENT ON SUCH ALLEGATIONS; PRIVATELY,
AMBASSADOR AGAIN ASSURED FOREIGN MINISTER THAT STORY
WAS FALSE; MOREOVER, SAID AMBASSADOR, AS IN PAST IF ROKG WERE
TO PUBLICIZE THESE PRIVATE ASSURANCES, WE WOULD NOT COMMENT.
WHILE FOREIGN MINISTER APPEARED RESIGNED TO THIS, HE
REITERATED HOPE WE WOULD ISSUE PUBLIC DENIALS. HE THEN
WENT ON TO EXPRESS CONSIDERABLE GOLLM ABOUT THE STATE OF
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U.S./ROK RELATIONS.

2. HE HAD HOPED, HE SAID, THINGS WOULD CALM DOWN BUT PAK
TONG-SUN, TROOP WITHDRAWALS, CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS,
FALSE NEWSPAPER STORIES ALL PERSISTED AND HE WAS GETTING
WORRIED AND PESSIMISTIC ABOUT RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. A
FEW PEOPLE WERE EVEN ALLEGING THAT SOME IN THE UNITED

STATES SEEMED BENT ON UNDERMINING PRESIDENT PAK HIMSELF. ALL KOREANS WANTED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES BUT NO ONE, INCLUDING HIMSELF, SEEMED TO KNOW WHAT TO DO TO IMPROVE MATTERS. WERE THE EXISTING SITUATION TO GO ON FOR A TIME FORNMIN WAS AFRAID UNFAVORABLE AND UNDESIRABLE BYPLAY WOULD EMERGE AND THIS HE CLEARLY WISHED TO AVOID. HE FACED TWO DAYS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE COMMITTEE INTERPRELLATIONS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND WORRIED ABOUT WHAT HE WOULD SAY IN RESPONSE TO THE TOUGH QUESTIONING HE CERTAINLY WOULD FACE.

3. IN AN EFFORT TO GIVE FORNMIN MORE POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE, AMBASSADOR RESPONDED AT SOME LENGTH. AGREEING THAT THERE WERE ALWAYS SOME WHO WISHED TO STIR UP PROBLEMS, AMBASSADOR SAID THERE WAS NOT MUCH THAT COULD BE DONE ABOUT SUCH ATTACKS EXCEPT TO HAVE FAITH IN THE LONG-TERM FAIRNESS OF THE AMERICAN PROCESS AND TO AVOID TAKING SUCH PRESS ATTACKS TOO SERIOUSLY. AMBASSADOR ALSO AGREED THAT THERE WERE SOME UNFORTUNATE ASPECTS IN THE RELATIONSHIP AT THE PRESENT TIME. BUT BEST APPROACH UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES WAS TO TACKLE PROBLEMS FORTHRIGHTLY AND AT SAME TIME TO EMPHASIZE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP. AMBASSADOR CITED PRESIDENT CARTER'S AND OTHER TOP USG OFFICIALS' STRONG STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE RELATIONSHIP AND U.S. COMMITMENTS TO THE SECURITY OF THE ROK. WE MUST WORK TOGETHER, AMBASSADOR URGED, TO INSURE ROK SECURITY. AS FOR THE BRIBERY ALLEGATIONS, THE ROKG SHOULD BE CONFIDENT
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IN THE EQUITY OF THE U.S. JUDICIAL PROCESS; IT WOULD GREATLY HELP IF THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT COULD PERSUADE PAK TONG-SUN TO COOPERATE IN THIS PROCESS. RELAXATION IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AREA COULD ALSO HELP TO IMPROVE ROKG IMAGE IN THE UNITED STATES. WE HAD AS NATIONS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT MUTUAL SECURITY, ECONOMIC, AND HISTORICAL INTERESTS AND IT WAS IMPORTANT TO CONTAIN PROBLEMS OF THE MOMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THESE LONG-TERM COMMON INTERESTS.

5. MORE SPECIFICALLY IN RESPONSE TO PAK'S QUESTIONS ON TROOP WITHDRAWALS, AMBASSADOR REITERATED RATIONALE CONTAINED IN PRESIDENT CARTER'D, UNDER SECRETARY HABIB'S, AND OTHER U.S. OFFICIAL STATEMENTS. WHILE KOREAN CONCERNS WERE UNDERSTAND-ABLE, IT BEHOVED BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO FOCUS ON ROK STRENGTHS AND THE POSITIVE RESULTS WHICH COULD FLOW FROM THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW U.S. GROUND FORCES. DRAWING ON UNDER SECRETARY HABIB'S RECENT TESTIMONY BEFORE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE, AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED U.S. CONTINUING DEDICATION TO MAINTENANCE OF SECURITY. FOUR OR FIVE YEARS PROVIDED LONG PERIOD TO GAUGE DEVELOPMENTS AND TO TAKE NECESSARY COMPENSATORY STEPS. UNITED STATES WAS NOT REKLESS OR FOOLISH; ITS DECISION WOULD REMAIN UNDER REVIEWS.

MOREOVER, NORTH KOREA WAS IN A DIFFICULT POSITION: IT HAD TO CALCULATE THAT A MORE AGGRESSIVE POSITION ON ITS PART COULD FORCE MODIFICATION OF U.S. POLICIES. WERE IT TO WAIT, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE RAPIDLY GROWING STRENGTH OF THE ROK WOULD WEIGH AGAINST THE NORTH. OUR GOVERNMENTS, SAID AMBASSADOR, SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON HOW TO EXPLOIT THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, HOW TO KEEP THE NORTH KOREANS ON THE DEFENSIVE, AND HOW TO DETER WAR PERMANENTLY.

6. WHILE HE REMAINED SOMEWHAT GLOOMY AND DISTRACTED THOUGH-OUT, FORNMIN PAK NODDED AT THESE REMARKS, THEN CONCLUDED THAT HE WOULD TELL ANTIONAL ASSEMBLY IT WAS VITAL FOR UNITED STATES AND KOREA TO CONTINUE WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPLEMENT THE TROOP WITHDRAWAL DECISION AND THAT GOALS SET WERE FEASIBLE. HE WOULD
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ALSO POINT OUT THAT TROOP DECISION OBVIOUSLY WOULD REMAIN UNDER REVIEW. AMBASSADOR AGAIN EMPHASIZED THAT POSITIVE APPROACH WAS THE BEST. THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT TAKE ACTIONS TO JEOPARDIZE THE SECURITY OF KOREA. IT WAS IMPORTANT TO GET DOWN TO THE BUSINESS OF IMPLEMENTING THE DECISION. IN THE MEAN-TIME IF THERE WERE UNTOWARD OR UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENTS THE TWO GOVERNMENTS COULD ALWAYS CONFER.
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